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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 001007

SIPDIS

FOR NEA, NEA/ELA, NEA/RA  
FOR OES, OES/IHA  
NSC STAFF FOR SINGH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/17/2016

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [AMED](#) [CASC](#) [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [EG](#) [KFLU](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT: AVIAN INFLUENZA UPDATE, AMBASSADOR CONFERS  
WITH PRIME MINISTER

REF: CAIRO 1006

Classified by Deputy Chief of Mission Stuart Jones for  
reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary. The GOE publicly announced at approximately 1800 local time discovery of H5N1 avian influenza in birds in Egypt. After an emergency meeting with key officials, Prime Minister Nazif confirmed to the Ambassador that seven samples from three different governorates had tested positive for H5N1. Nazif did not request any assistance from the USG at this time; an aide to Nazif told emboff a few hours later that he was coordinating assistance requests from various GOE agencies. End summary.

2. (C) The Ambassador spoke to Prime Minister Nazif February 17 after the latter completed a meeting with key GOE officials on the avian influenza outbreak. Nazif made no request for assistance; the Ambassador stressed that the USG could best help if it received specific requests that had been coordinated with all concerned GOE agencies. The Prime Minister took that on board; the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff, Sami Saad Zaghloul, told ECPO Counselor not long thereafter that he was coordinating assistance requests from various GOE agencies. Zaghloul said the GOE would likely need masks, disinfectant and vaccines for poultry.

3. (C) Nazif told the Ambassador that four of the positive H5N1 samples had come from Cairo, two from the neighboring governorate of Giza, and one from the Upper Egypt governorate of Minya. (Note. The GOE specifically mentioned these three governorates in its public announcement. End note.) Nazif said that the GOE's veterinary agency would be in charge of culling infected and exposed birds, with the Ministry of Defense providing closed trucks for the operation.

4. (C) Nazif also said that the GOE would set up a call center to answer public inquiries about the outbreak. The center would be organized by the Ministry of Health, though that Ministry's role would not be made public in order not to raise concern. Nazif also said that the Ministry of Information would serve as the GOE's public voice on the issue.

5. (C) Zaghloul reported that the positive Cairo samples had come from geographically diverse parts of the city, including Old Cairo, Heliopolis (northeast of downtown) and Helwan (to the south). He reported that all samples from Giza and Cairo had been from small markets or backyard poultry farms. Contrary to the information reported reftel, Zaghloul said that the Minya sample had come not from a turkey farm, but from a reseller who purchased small numbers of birds from households and small farmers for resale in bulk to Cairo.

RICCIARDONE